English Grammar in Use
Grammar Reference

Raymond Murphy

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For further practice:
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Present perfect (I have done)

Tom is looking for his key. He can't find it.
He **has lost** his key.

He **has lost** his key = He lost it recently, and he still doesn't have it.

Have/has lost is the *present perfect simple*:

I/we/they/you **have** (= I've etc.)	**finished** **lost** **done** **been** etc.
he/she/it **has** (= he's etc.)	

The present perfect simple is **have/has** + *past participle*. The past participle often ends in **-ed** (finish**ed**/decid**ed** etc.), but many important verbs are *irregular* (**lost/done/written** etc.).

For a list of irregular verbs, see page 12.

Present perfect (I have done) and past simple (I did)

Now Tom **has found** his key. He has it now.

Has he **lost** his key? No, he **has found** it.

Did he **lose** his key? Yes, he **did**.

He **lost** his key (*past simple*)
but now he **has found** it. (*present perfect*)

The present perfect (something **has happened**) is a *present* tense. It always tells us about the situation *now*. 'Tom **has lost** his key' = he doesn't have his key *now* (see Unit 7).

The past simple (something **happened**) tells us only about the *past*. If somebody says 'Tom **lost** his key', this doesn't tell us whether he has the key now or not. It tells us only that he lost his key at some time in the past.

Do *not* use the present perfect if the situation now is different. Compare:

- They'**ve gone** away. They'll be back on Friday. (they are away *now*)
  They **went** away, but I think they're back at home now. (*not* They've gone)

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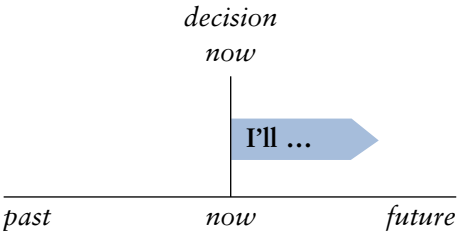
I will and I'm going to

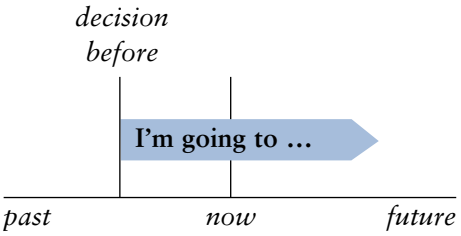
Sue is talking to Helen:

will (**'ll**): We use **will** when we decide to do something at the time of speaking. The speaker has not decided before. The party is a new idea.



Later that day, Helen meets Dave:

(be) going to: We use (**be**) **going to** when we have *already decided* to do something. Helen had already decided to invite lots of people *before* she spoke to Dave.



Compare:

- ‘Gary phoned while you were out.’ ‘OK. I**'ll call** him back.’
  ‘Gary phoned while you were out.’ ‘Yes, I know. I**'m going to call** him back.’
- ‘Ann is in hospital.’ ‘Oh really? I didn’t know. I**'ll go** and visit her.’
  ‘Ann is in hospital.’ ‘Yes, I know. I**'m going to visit** her this evening.’

When we say that ‘something **is going to happen**’, the situation *now* makes this clear. The man is walking towards the wall now, so we can see that he **is going to walk** into it.

situation now

going to

future happening

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Past continuous (**I was doing**)

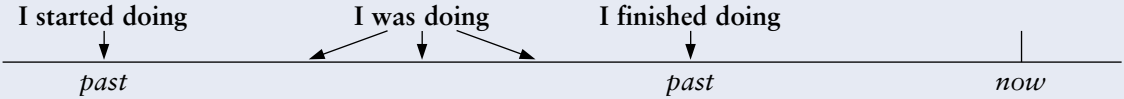
Yesterday Karen and Jim played tennis. They began at 10 o'clock and finished at 11.30.
So, at 10.30 they **were playing** tennis.

They **were playing** = they were in the middle of playing. They had not finished playing.

Was/were -ing is the *past continuous*:

I/he/she/it	**was**	play**ing**
we/you/they	**were**	do**ing**
		work**ing** etc.

I **was doing** something = I was in the middle of doing something at a certain time. The action or situation had already started before this time, but had not finished:



- This time last year I **was living** in Brazil.
- What **were** you **doing** at 10 o'clock last night?
- I waved to Helen, but she **wasn't looking**.

Past continuous (**I was doing**) and past simple (**I did**)

Past continuous (in the middle of an action)

- I **was walking** home when I met Dave. (in the middle of an action)
- Kate **was watching** television when we arrived.

Past simple (complete action)

- I **walked** home after the party last night. (= all the way, completely)
- Kate **watched** television a lot when she was ill last year.

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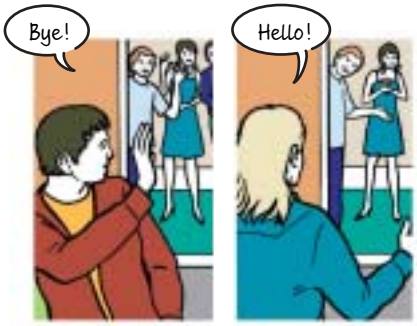
Past perfect (I had done)

at 10.30 *at 11.00*



PAUL *SARAH*

Sarah went to a party last week. Paul went to the party too, but they didn't see each other. Paul left the party at 10.30 and Sarah arrived at 11 o'clock. So:

When Sarah arrived at the party, Paul wasn't there.

He **had gone** home.

Had gone is the *past perfect (simple)*:

I/we/they/you he/she/it	**had**	(= I'**d** etc.) (= he'**d** etc.)	**gone** **seen** **finished** etc.

The past perfect simple is **had** + *past participle* (**gone/seen/finished** etc). For a list of irregular verbs, see page 12.

Sometimes we talk about something that happened in the past:

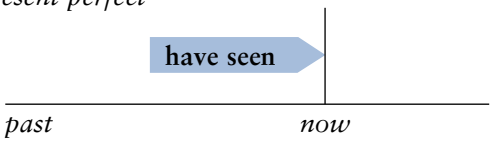
- Sarah **arrived** at the party.

This is the starting point of the story. Then, if we want to talk about things that happened *before* this time, we use the past perfect (**had** …):

- When Sarah arrived at the party, Paul **had** already **gone** home.

Compare the *present perfect* (**have seen** etc.) and the *past perfect* (**had seen** etc.):

Present perfect



- Who is that woman? I've never **seen** her before.
- We aren't hungry. We've just **had** lunch.
- The house is dirty. They **haven't cleaned** it for weeks.

Past perfect

- I didn't know who she was. I'd never **seen** her before. (= before that time)
- We weren't hungry. We'd just **had** lunch.
- The house was dirty. They **hadn't cleaned** it for weeks.

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Reported speech (He said that ...)

You want to tell somebody what Paul said. There are two ways of doing this:

You can repeat Paul's words (*direct* speech):
Paul said, **'I'm feeling ill.'**

Or you can use *reported* speech:
Paul said **that he was feeling ill.**

Compare:

direct	Paul said, '	I	am	feeling ill.'
reported	Paul said that	**he**	**was**	feeling ill.

In writing we use these quotation marks to show direct speech.

When we use reported speech, the main verb of the sentence is usually past (Paul **said** that … / I **told** her that … etc.). The rest of the sentence is usually past too:

- Paul **said** that he **was feeling** ill.
- I **told** Lisa that I **didn't have** any money.

In general, the *present* form in direct speech changes to the *past* form in reported speech:

am/is → **was**	do/does → **did**	will → **would**
are → **were**	have/has → **had**	can → **could**

want/like/know/go etc. → **wanted/liked/knew/went** etc.

Say and **tell**

If you say *who* you are talking to, use **tell**:

TELL SOMEBODY

- Sonia **told me** that you were in hospital. (*not* Sonia said me)
- What did you **tell the police**? (*not* say the police)

Otherwise use **say**:

SAY ~~SOMEBODY~~

- Sonia **said** that you were in hospital. (*not* Sonia told that …)
- What did you **say**?

But you can '**say** something **to** somebody':

- Ann **said** goodbye **to** me and left. (*not* Ann said me goodbye)
- What did you **say to** the police?

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If I do ... and If I did ...

(1) Lisa has lost her watch. She tells Sue:

LISA: I've lost my watch. Have you seen it anywhere?
SUE: No, but **if I find** it, I'll tell you.

In this example, Sue feels there is a real possibility that she will find the watch. So she says:
if I **find** … , **I'll** … .

(2) Joe says:

If **I found** a wallet in the street, I'd take it to the police station.

This is a different type of situation. Here, Joe doesn't expect to find a wallet in the street; he is *imagining* a situation that will probably not happen. So he says:
if I **found** … , **I'd** (= I **would**) … . (*not* if I find … , I'll …)

When you imagine something like this, you use **if** + *past*
(**if** I **found** / **if** there **was** / **if** we **didn't** etc.).
But the meaning is *not* past:

- What would you do **if** you **won** a million pounds?
  (we don't really expect this to happen)

If I had known ...

Last month Gary was in hospital for a few days. Rachel didn't know this, so she didn't go to visit him. They met a few days ago. Rachel said:

If I **had known** you were in hospital, I **would have gone** to see you.

Rachel said: **If** I **had known** you were in hospital … . This tells us that she *didn't* know he was in hospital.

We use **if** + **had** (**'d**) … to talk about the past (**if** I **had known/been/done** etc.):

- I didn't see you when you passed me in the street. **If** I**'d seen** you, of course I would have said hello. (but I didn't see you)
- The view was wonderful. **If I'd had** a camera with me, I would have taken some photographs. (but I didn't have a camera)

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Must and can't

Present	I/you/he (etc.)	**must** **can't**	**be** (tired / hungry / at work etc.) **be** (doing / going / joking etc.) **do / get / know / have** etc.

You can use **must** to say that you believe something is certain:

- You've been travelling all day. You **must be** tired. (Travelling is tiring and you've been travelling all day, so you **must** be tired.)

You can use **can't** to say that you believe something is not possible:

- You've just had lunch. You **can't be** hungry already. (People are not normally hungry just after eating a meal. You've just eaten, so you **can't** be hungry.)

Past	I/you/he (etc.)	**must** **can't**	**have**	**been** (asleep / at work etc.) **been** (doing / looking etc.) **gone / got / known** etc.

- I didn't hear the phone. I **must have been** asleep.
- Tom walked into a wall. He **can't have been looking** where he was going.

May and might

Present	I/you/he (etc.)	**may** **might**	(**not**)	**be** (true / in his office etc.) **be** (doing / working / having etc.) **know / work / want** etc.

We use **may** or **might** to say that something is a possibility. Usually you can use **may** or **might**, so you can say:

- It **may** be true. *or* It **might** be true. (= perhaps it is true)
- She **might** know. *or* She **may** know.

Past	I/you/he (etc.)	**may** **might**	(**not**) **have**	**been** (asleep / at home etc.) **been** (doing / working / feeling etc.) **known / had / wanted / left** etc.

- A: I wonder why Kate didn't answer the phone.
  B: She **may have been** asleep. (= perhaps she was asleep)
- A: I was surprised that Kate wasn't at the meeting yesterday.
  B: She **might not have known** about it. (= perhaps she didn't know)

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Passive (is done / was done)

The passive is **be** (**is/was** etc.) + *past participle* (**done/cleaned/seen** etc.):
(be) done **(be) cleaned** **(be) damaged** **(be) built** **(be) seen** etc.

For irregular past participles (**done/seen/known** etc.), see page 12.

Present simple

active: **clean(s) / see(s)** etc. — Somebody **cleans** this room every day.

passive: **am/is/are + cleaned/seen** etc. — This room **is cleaned** every day.

- Many accidents **are caused** by careless driving.
- **I'm not** often **invited** to parties.
- How **is** this word **pronounced**?

Past simple

active: **cleaned/saw** etc. — Somebody **cleaned** this room yesterday.

passive: **was/were + cleaned/seen** etc. — This room **was cleaned** yesterday.

- We **were woken** up by a loud noise during the night.
- 'Did you go to the party?' 'No, I **wasn't invited**.'
- How much money **was stolen** in the robbery?

Passive verbs with two objects

Some verbs can have two objects. For example, **give**:

- Somebody gave **the police** (*object 1*) **the information** (*object 2*). (= Somebody gave the information to the police)

So it is possible to make two passive sentences:

- **The police** were given the information. *or*
  The information was given to the police.

Other verbs which can have two objects are:
ask **offer** **pay** **show** **teach** **tell**

When we use these verbs in the passive, most often we begin with the *person*:

- **I was offered** the job, but I refused it. (= they offered me the job)
- **You will be given** plenty of time to decide. (= we will give you plenty of time)
- **Have you been shown** the new machine? (= has anybody shown you?)
- **The men were paid** £400 to do the work. (= somebody paid the men £400)

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Verb + -ing

Here are some verbs that are followed by **-ing**:

stop	**postpone**	**admit**	**avoid**	**imagine**	**enjoy**	**suggest**
finish	**consider**	**deny**	**risk**	**fancy**	**mind**	

- Suddenly everybody **stopped** talk**ing**. There was silence.
- I'll do the shopping when I've **finished** clean**ing** the flat.

Verb + to ...

If these verbs are followed by another verb, the structure is usually verb + **to** … (*infinitive*)

offer	**decide**	**hope**	**deserve**	**promise**
agree	**plan**	**manage**	**afford**	**threaten**
refuse	**arrange**	**fail**	**forget**	**learn**

- It was late, so we **decided to take** a taxi home.
- Simon was in a difficult situation, so I **agreed to help** him.

Preposition (in/for/about etc.) + -ing

If a preposition (**in/for/about** etc.) is followed by a verb, the verb ends in **-ing**:

	preposition	*verb* (**-ing**)	
Are you interested	**in**	work**ing**	for us?
I'm not very good	**at**	learn**ing**	languages.
Sue must be fed up	**with**	study**ing**.	
What are the advantages	**of**	hav**ing**	a car?
Thanks very much	**for**	invit**ing**	me to your party.
How	**about**	meet**ing**	for lunch tomorrow?
Why don't you go out	**instead of**	sit**ting**	at home all the time?
Carol went to work	**in spite of**	feel**ing**	ill.

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Spelling rules

Nouns, verbs and adjectives can have the following endings:

noun + **-s/-es** (*plural*)	book**s**	idea**s**	match**es**
verb + **-s/-es** (after **he/she/it**)	work**s**	enjoy**s**	wash**es**
verb + **-ing**	work**ing**	enjoy**ing**	wash**ing**
verb + **-ed**	work**ed**	enjoy**ed**	wash**ed**
adjective + **-er** (*comparative*)	cheap**er**	quick**er**	bright**er**
adjective + **-est** (*superlative*)	cheap**est**	quick**est**	bright**est**
adjective + **-ly** (*adverb*)	cheap**ly**	quick**ly**	bright**ly**

Words ending in **-y** (baby, carry, easy etc.)

If a word ends in a *consonant** + **y** (**-by/-ry/-sy/-vy** etc.)

y changes to **ie** before the ending **-s**:

baby/bab**ies**	story/stor**ies**	country/countr**ies**	secretary/secretar**ies**
hurry/hurr**ies**	study/studi**es**	apply/appl**ies**	try/tr**ies**

y changes to **i** before the ending **-ed**:

hurry/hurr**ied**	study/studi**ed**	apply/appl**ied**	try/tr**ied**

y changes to **i** before the endings **-er** and **-est**:

easy/eas**ier**/eas**iest**	heavy/heav**ier**/heav**iest**	lucky/lucki**er**/lucki**est**

y changes to **i** before the ending **-ly**:

easy/eas**ily**	heavy/heav**ily**	temporary/temporar**ily**

Doubling consonants (**stop/stopping/stopped, wet/wetter/wettest** etc.)

Sometimes a word ends in *vowel* + *consonant*. For example:

stop pl**an** r**ub** b**ig** w**et** th**in** prefe**r** regre**t**

Before the endings **-ing/-ed/-er/-est**, we double the consonant at the end. So **p → pp**, **n → nn** etc. For example:

sto**p**	p → **pp**	sto**pp**ing	sto**pp**ed
pla**n**	n → **nn**	pla**nn**ing	pla**nn**ed
ru**b**	b → **bb**	ru**bb**ing	ru**bb**ed
bi**g**	g → **gg**	bi**gg**er	bi**gg**est
we**t**	t → **tt**	we**tt**er	we**tt**est
thi**n**	n → **nn**	thi**nn**er	thi**nn**est

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List of irregular verbs

infinitive	*past simple*	*past participle*
be	was/were	been
beat	beat	beaten
become	became	become
begin	began	begun
bend	bent	bent
bet	bet	bet
bite	bit	bitten
blow	blew	blown
break	broke	broken
bring	brought	brought
broadcast	broadcast	broadcast
build	built	built
burst	burst	burst
buy	bought	bought
catch	caught	caught
choose	chose	chosen
come	came	come
cost	cost	cost
creep	crept	crept
cut	cut	cut
deal	dealt	dealt
dig	dug	dug
do	did	done
draw	drew	drawn
drink	drank	drunk
drive	drove	driven
eat	ate	eaten
fall	fell	fallen
feed	fed	fed
feel	felt	felt
fight	fought	fought
find	found	found
flee	fled	fled
fly	flew	flown
forbid	forbade	forbidden
forget	forgot	forgotten
forgive	forgave	forgiven
freeze	froze	frozen
get	got	got
give	gave	given
go	went	gone
grow	grew	grown
hang	hung	hung
have	had	had
hear	heard	heard
hide	hid	hidden
hit	hit	hit
hold	held	held
hurt	hurt	hurt
keep	kept	kept
kneel	knelt	knelt
know	knew	known
lay	laid	laid
lead	led	led
leave	left	left
lend	lent	lent
let	let	let
lie	lay	lain

infinitive	*past simple*	*past participle*
light	lit	lit
lose	lost	lost
make	made	made
mean	meant	meant
meet	met	met
pay	paid	paid
put	put	put
read	read [red]*	read [red]*
ride	rode	ridden
ring	rang	rung
rise	rose	risen
run	ran	run
say	said	said
see	saw	seen
seek	sought	sought
sell	sold	sold
send	sent	sent
set	set	set
sew	sewed	sewn/sewed
shake	shook	shaken
shine	shone	shone
shoot	shot	shot
show	showed	shown/showed
shrink	shrank	shrunk
shut	shut	shut
sing	sang	sung
sink	sank	sunk
sit	sat	sat
sleep	slept	slept
slide	slid	slid
speak	spoke	spoken
spend	spent	spent
spit	spat	spat
split	split	split
spread	spread	spread
spring	sprang	sprung
stand	stood	stood
steal	stole	stolen
stick	stuck	stuck
sting	stung	stung
stink	stank	stunk
strike	struck	struck
swear	swore	sworn
sweep	swept	swept
swim	swam	swum
swing	swung	swung
take	took	taken
teach	taught	taught
tear	tore	torn
tell	told	told
think	thought	thought
throw	threw	thrown
understand	understood	understood
wake	woke	woken
wear	wore	worn
weep	wept	wept
win	won	won
write	wrote	written

* *pronunciation*

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